

*

Arlington Historic District Commissions

November 15, 2018
Whittemore Robbins House

Approved Minutes

Commissioners
Present:

N. Aikenhead, M. Audin, D. Baldwin, C. Barry,
C. Hamilton, S. Makowka, C. Tee, J. Worden

Commissioners
Not Present:

M. Bush, B. Cohen, S. Lipp

Guests:

T. Smith, A. Simao, P Dalton, G. Wolf, J. Lo,
J. Doyle, S. Kirby, J. Raitt, G. Goldstein

1. AHDC Meeting Opens 8:00pm
2. Appointment of alternate Commissioners; Mt Gilboa – C. Barry, C. Hamilton, N. Aikenhead (S. Makowka will step in for N. Aikenhead on 61 Crescent Hill since she will recuse herself)
3. Approval of draft minutes from September 27 and October 25, 2018; D. Baldwin moved approval as amended by J. Worden for the September 27 minutes, C. Barry seconded. Unanimous approval. S. Makowka read J. Worden modifications on 10/25/18 minutes. D. Baldwin moved approval with J. Worden
- 4.
5. Communications
 - a. CONA Application for 26 Academy Street for door change
 - b. CONA Application for 80 Pleasant St. for minor repairs
 - c. Emails for distribution of materials for discussion at Executive Session meeting on 11-12-18
 - d. CONA Application for 21-23 Russell Terrace for foundation repairs
 - e. CONA Application for 100 Pleasant Street for roof repairs
 - f. Emails and CONA Application for 61 Crescent Hill Ave.
 - g. Email and application for 20 Central Street (coming in for informal – formal hearing in December)
 - h. Email requesting copy of 20 Central Street certificate previously issued
 - i. CONA Application for 39 Westmoreland Ave. for door change
 - j. Abutter request for info on formal hearing at 180-182 Pleasant Street
 - k. Emails from 21-23 Russell Terrace re: reschedule to December meeting
 - l. Application from J. Jeffer Lo for window changes at 15 Oak Knoll
 - m. J. Worden said he attended meeting and submitted Preservation Massachusetts certificate listing Arlington High School as 10 Most Endangered Historic Resources
6. Other Business

- a. Central Street and Avon Place Historic District vacant commissioner seat
- b. Discussion on Guidelines – S. Makowka had circulated revised guidelines. S. Makowka proposed to circulate to Town Counsel for review. S. Makowka moved approval, seconded by C. Barry. Unanimous approval. S. Makowka will circulate to Town Counsel for review.
- c. Report from Streetscape sub-committee – meeting with DPW and Town Manager on 11/15 and meeting again in January. Progress on signage and discussions re sidewalk treatment but is a hard issue to find workable options, have agreed to red mats at intersections.

7. New Business

- a. **Informal Hearing Presentation for 27 Maple Street (Town of Arlington) regarding ongoing renovations.** S. Makowka indicated that this is an informal hearing and hearing is to provide the applicant feedback on the presentation of proposed changes. J. Raitt, Director of Planning, introduced architect Bill Sterling of Sterling Associates to give presentation. S. Makowka suggested that the main entrance is where they should spend the most time at this meeting. B. Sterling explained that the windows at what is now the Maple Street entrance were changed into doors in 1980s. All entrances must be handicap accessible today. Maple Street is the main entrance to the building they want to announce the entrance with a canopy over a set of new doors and hopefully with banners over the top. He showed a picture of the flagstaff that hung over main entrance on Academy St when the structure was originally built. They are trying to evoke that this is the main entrance on building with this treatment. No idea yet of what the flag/banner will be over the entrance – but intent is to draw attention to this as main entrance to building. J. Worden said the doors shown are inappropriate for this building. It was noted that the doors on west and east sides will be the same doors used in 1984 -- oak doors with some glass with raised panel moldings – and that they could consider doing that here if the all glass French doors are not to the Commission's liking. The building is regularly used until 10pm and the improvements to visibility and accessibility is highly desired by the COA. Also, having more glass area in the lobby helps people to see their ride coming while remaining inside. Glass across entire width of proposed opening would have benches on either side of doors where patrons could wait and see arriving cars. They are thinking about a weathered copper color finish. M. Audin said there are a lot of treatments (acid etch, etc) to accelerate the patina. Moldings will likely be a different color of copper than the slabs you are putting on but you can have high quality finishers come in to blend all that out. B. sterling clarified that they are proposing a copper colored powder coated finish – they would bring samples and mock ups because there are many totally different finishes you can get. M. Audin argued that this is a public building and its critical for us to see this “copperish finish”. This is a dramatic change and idea is relatively modern for this entrance. C. Barry said they should think hard about the “fake copper”. In response to a question, B. Sterling clarified that the proposed canopy extends about 10 feet out from the building. Suggestions whether pulling the canopy back (less extension) would help reduce apparent size, cost, and stress on building due to cantilever. Discussion of wood doors on east/west entrances – south facing doors do not hold up well. On east and west recessed areas don't get much light so they won't weather as poorly. More of maintenance problem on south side if wood doors and these doors are used a lot. The would be removing the existing center pillar to make room for the proposed entrance doors. S. Makowka said concerned how canopy engages brownstone horizontal element below windows that is part of the original fabric of the structure. He sees this as part of ornamentation of building and would want to maintain that feature un damaged. He also indicated that, to him, putting muntins in the proposed doors makes

them look like they are on the back of someone's sunroom but this is an entrance to institutional building and should have strong doors. S. Makowka summarized that it appears there are some Commissioners that won't want to see significant changes at this location while some appear to think that there may be an acceptable approach to changing it.

Architect also wanted to address the fact that the existing steps on Academy St. entrance are severely deteriorated. He indicated that there is a lot of ornamentation and attention to detail on the building but that the brownstone steps was a poor choice for this application given how soft the stone is. They looked at a number of brownstone choices, but the brownstone quarries these came from are no longer open and the brownstone products available from China don't even look like our brownstone and are cost prohibitive. C. Barry said there is a place in Michigan producing brownstone that may match. B. Sterling said the alternatives they are considering are 1) to go over that existing stone with mortar and set bluestone (lilac) from upstate NY which goes well with brick color, or 2) remove the stairs entirely, put in poured concrete steps with a veneer of a brown colored bluestone. All agreed that the steps will need to look substantial. At that entrance, there is currently a glass door in front of original wood door. They would propose to remove the glass door and then better weather strip the original wood door. Doors on other side of building (East entrance) – existing doors look substantial and proposing putting in smaller door with transom next to it. The current doors are not code compliant (30" and need to be 36"). Wood panel rather than the glass transom would be S. Makowka's preference to be consistent with original condition and he wondered if the door could be placed symmetrically in the opening. B. Sterling said that they could explore resetting the door right out on the face instead of being recessed allowing for a greater swing. S. Makowka summarized feedback that they should maintain symmetry if possible, as well as appropriate size and scale for this door.

Feedback on proposed chimney extensions – B. Sterling explained that the 'chimneys' were originally fresh air intakes for classrooms. In 1984 this wasn't adequate and changes were made that were problematic. They like the idea of using chimneys as air intakes and exhausts for the structure. The one on right would be an air intake and left would be exhaust. The need the extensions to hide the required manifolds sit behind the exhaust louvers. They will locate the fans fan at the bottom of chimneys. A Commissioner indicated that copper could be safer than trying to match the existing brick. They would have fixed louvers, damper will be inside and you won't see them.

The proposed move of the cooling tower and kitchen exhaust were discussed also. Seems appropriate to tuck kitchen exhaust into less visible location as shown. The need to move existing cooling tower due to clearance requirements. Are proposing to put on other side of parking lot. S. Makowka indicated that moving to more prominent location could be problematic – screening or moving to another location could help. Applicant asked if intake vent can be moved. Also, they need to put cover over waste bins and redo a recessed stair at the side – no major issue since minimal visibility and there is an existing stair there.

- b. **Formal Hearing re: 180-182 Pleasant Street for changes on the exterior.** T. Smith (architect) gave presentation. They are looking to gut renovate 180-182 Pleasant Street. Want better curb appeal. It is currently a stucco house with existing vinyl windows. They are proposing to remove the existing front porch and to replace it with a more traditional porch with wood rails and columns. They would also replace the existing entry doors at the ground floor and at the 2nd floor deck. Modifying existing

dormer slightly. They have shown 8" diameter round columns on front porch but they may want to consider a 10" square post instead of round. Front porch stucco is cracked and deteriorated. S. Makowka said as long as it has the appropriate detailing it doesn't matter to him square or round. M. Audin said the double or triple column thing is a bit over the top for this structure. Proportionately historically these are modified doric columns. 3 pillars – 10" would probably be appropriate. S. Makowka suggested that they look at some other detailing used on the porches on other houses in District. The Commission commented that traditional spacing between balusters on porches and railings was quite tight and we typically ask for 4" center to center spacing of balusters. Sometimes of older railing stock – the relationship of solid to void is 1 to 1 ratio. The bottom rail is often deep and thick also. 2 entrance doors on front right now and will be reconfigured from the existing placement to make the vestibules more equal. First floor is a generous entry hall, but the one on right is only 3' wide and goes directly to stair and up and they want to balance the halls equally. Vinyl windows already exist. They are not that old and all meet the energy code. Discussion that existing stained glass window on the right side of house should not be removed entirely but may need to be moved over.

Right side elevation discussion – All the existing window fenestration is staying as it is except where they are adding a larger shed dormer. The Commission expressed concern that the windows don't relate to one another well on the right side elevation. The shed dormer itself is also a concern. A suggestion was made to make it a hipped roof instead of a shed dormer to diminish the visual impact. It was noted that the other side has a hipped roof. This change will diminish massing at front and back edges and make it visually less intrusive. It was suggested that they make the windows less tall in the dormer. As proposed, the windows are close to or taller than the 2nd story windows. For example, on the other side dormer windows are shorter. Can replicate front dormer on sides with windows.

Discussion of materials -- No exposed pressure treated wood allowed. Composite decking where it won't be seen on back is okay, but mahogany or fir on front would be appropriate. Painted wood rails, newels and balusters are painted. Front will be seen so can't be composite. The applicant clarified that it is open under the rear deck and not closed in at all. Posts on back porch would have to be larger and encased. Discussion of proposed recessed deck on back. This is likely visible from next street behind due to elevation and Commission would like to see a more traditional treatment, perhaps dormered roof like on the front with open sides. Note re: front dormer, indicated no exterior changes but existing drawings show 6' width but proposed drawings show 11' width. Applicant to investigate issue. C. Barry said you have a window alignment problem on the back – 1st and 2nd floor windows don't align as would be appropriate. On West side elevation alignment of back 2 windows will help visually. M. Audin said he might want to preserve the "sleeping porch" character on the back. S. Makowka said he has no issue with regular windows as long as alignment is corrected. Also, it is important focus on vertical and head alignments for window openings though sills can vary in height to some extent.

- c. **Formal Hearing re: 12 Elder Terrace for demolition of an existing garage – Postponed per Applicant Request**
- d. **Informal Hearing re: 61 Crescent Hill Ave. (Doyle) for foundation and retaining wall repair and discussion on roofline change.** N. Aikenhead recused herself and S. Makowka appointed to replace her on the Commission for purposes of this hearing. Looking to remove some lower courses of vinyl siding on the side of the house to

expose basement walls that have been covered up in the past. M. Audin said the addition to the left was just stuck on and there is no consistency on the rest of the house with regards to the elevation of the lower vinyl courses. One of the things that might help would be to hold the line of the main house and where it dips down (such as at this location) let it be a different material that is sympathetic with the rest of the house. S Makowka asked if anyone has any objection to adding a small basement window along the side façade – none given by commissioners. It was noted that the foundation below this area is stone. S. Makowka said leaving it up to the monitor makes sense to him. J. Worden moved that this is such an insubstantial project that it qualifies for a 10 day certificate, seconded by D. Baldwin. J. Worden made a motion to allow removal of the bit of vinyl as indicated, the insertion of the propose window, and that monitor shall approve the final treatment of now exposed portion between bottom of floor line and top of foundation prior to installation. Unanimous approval. S. Lipp appointed monitor.

8. OPEN FORUM

Ordinarily, any matter presented to the Commission under Open Forum will neither be acted upon nor a formal decision made, absent a previously noticed agenda item, but the Commission may make a decision if it deems it appropriate and necessary for the public good.

- a. J. Jeffers Lo submitted application for window replacements at 15 Oak Knoll. Work on side of house – barely visible windows, possibly some visibility at a distance from Academy Street. Four windows, same size as existing ones. Pella architectural series aluminum clad windows. This house is at the end of the cul de sac and you do not see that side of the house from Oak Knoll. Was going to match replacements on back of house but can match what is upstairs. S. Makowka asked if this could either be considered eligible for a 10-day certificate or a CONA. Discussion that 10-day was not appropriate given we just receiving the submission at tonight's meeting. S. Makowka will stop by property and determine if it qualifies for a CONA and if not she can come in for a formal hearing for next month. It was noted that a plot plan is also required which would help show the location of the windows and the orientation.

9. REVIEW OF PROJECTS

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION – To discuss ongoing litigation - NOT REQUIRED

11. MEETING ADJOURNED – 11pm